Twin-needle stitching

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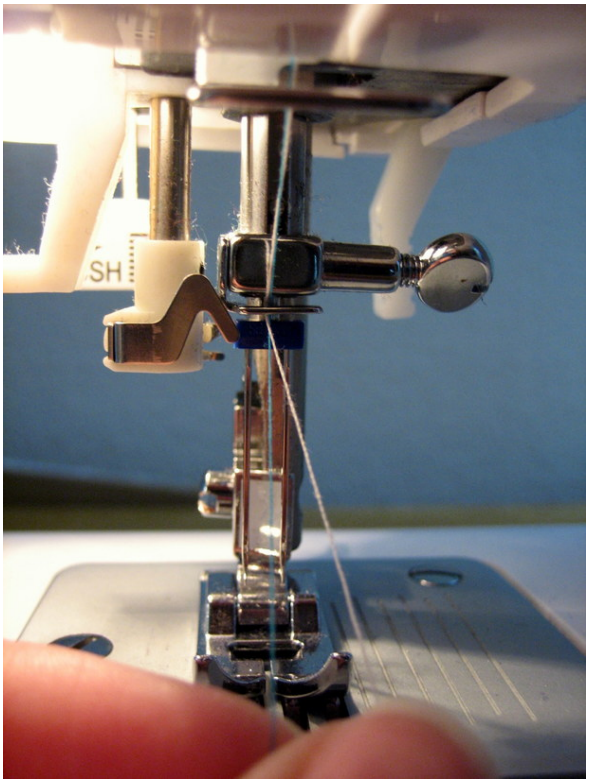
http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/twin-needle-stitching



Twin-needle stitching can be used for quick hem finishes, pintucking and even decorative stitching. Twin-needle stitching is commonly used to hem knits and achieve the look of RTW clothing. This type of stitching may be accomplished on most machines with the purchase of a twin needle.

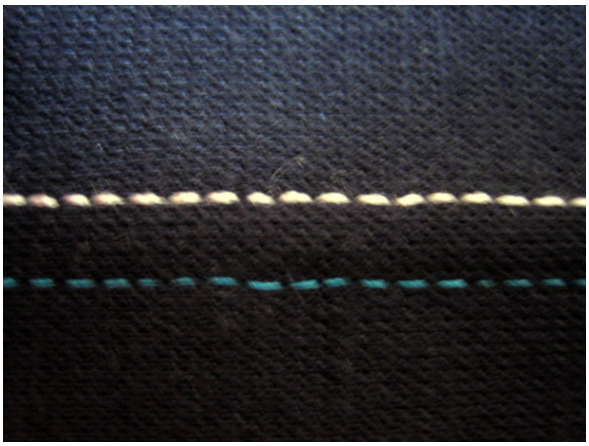
Step 1 — Determining machine capability

To sew with a twin needle, your sewing machine must have: * zigzag capability * throat plate that has a hole wide enough for the double needle * 2 thread spool holders * zigzag foot or another foot with an opening wide enough for the twin needle Don't worry if your machine manual doesn't mention twin needle stitching. Mine didn't but my basic machine (Singer Esteem) handled it just fine.

Step 2 — Selecting a twin needle

Twin needles come in different sizes like other needles but you will notice above that there are 2 numbers in the size. * 1st number = distance between the needles (measured in millimeters--mm) * 2nd number = actual size of the needles The first needle above on the left is a twin needle size of 80 with 2.0 mm between the needles. The second needle on the right is a size of 75 with 4.0 mm between the needles. (I used the 4.0/75 needle for the demonstration below. I liked the spacing better for hems.) Even though each needle will get its own thread, only one bobbin thread is used. One needle is slightly shorter than the other so a single bobbin can pick up both threads.

Step 6 — Selecting your Stitch



The stitch: * zigzag stitch should be selected * stitch length = 2.5-3.0 * stitch width = 0.5 You essentially want a zigzag stitch that is so narrow, it looks like a straight stitch. The twin needles create 2 parallel lines of topstitching and a zigzag stitch on the underside. The zigzag stitch helps maintain the stretchability in a knit hem. For my example, I used a total of 3 different colored threads. When I hemmed my knit cardigan, I wound a small amount of the matching thread around a 2nd bobbin. So I ended up with one thread spool and 2 bobbins with the same thread.

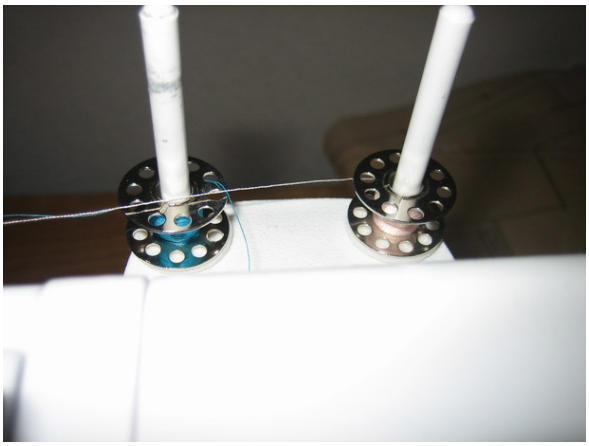
Step 7 — Begin stitching

To prep the hem to be stitched, fold over and iron your hem in place. You are stitching on the RIGHT side of the fabric. Because you are stitching on the right side of the fabric, it is very important that your folded over hem be even because you won't be able to see how close your stitches are to the raw edge. You will need to use your seam gauge on the throat plate or mark the throat plate with a piece of tape where your hem should hit so that the needles line up with the underside raw edge. In this picture, my 1-inch hem lined up perfectly with the last mark on the seam gauge on the throat plate.

Step 8 — Troubleshooting

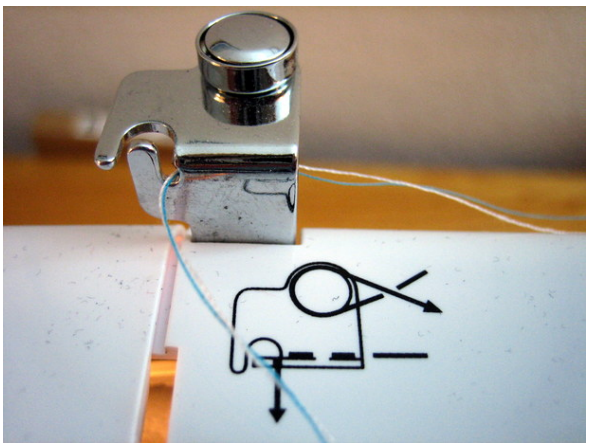
The twin needles create 2 parallel lines of topstitching and a zigzag stitch on the underside. The zigzag stitch helps maintain the stretchability in a knit hem. All the examples of twin needle stitching I could find showed a zigzag underside stitch where 2 different threads were visible. If your stitching looks like the above picture, you shouldn't need to adjust the tension. If you notice sporadic bubbling in your topstitching, it probably isn't a tension problem (that would give you consistent bubbling). If you look at the zigzag underside of the fabric, you should see that your stitching is way past the raw edge of the hem in the areas of the bubbling. You just want the top row of stitches to catch as close as possible to the raw edge without going past it.

Step 3 — Multiple thread spools



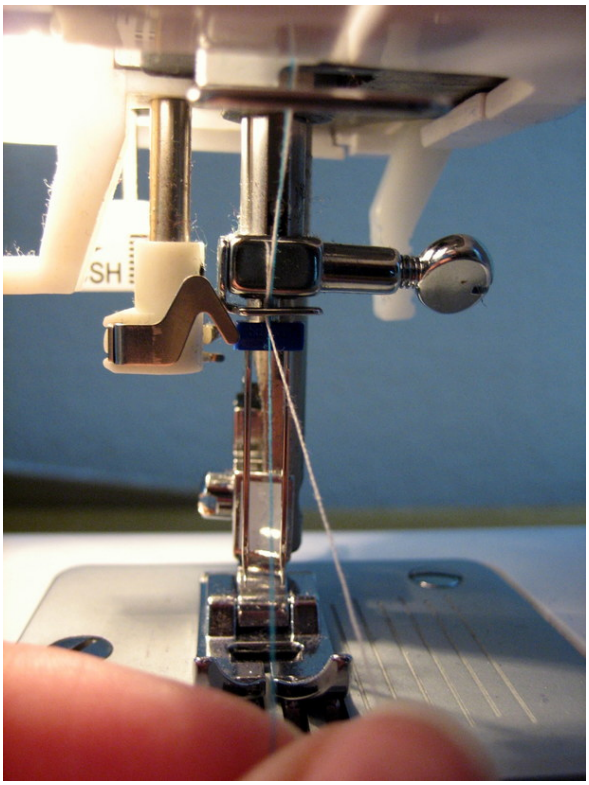
Check your machine manual. Your machine may require that you separate the threads at the tension disks or thread guides. If you have a basic machine like mine, you can thread as follows. Each needle gets its own thread spool on a different spool holder. When I sewed, the 2 threads got twisted together at the needle but didn't mess up my stitching. If this is a problem for you, you can try Julie Culshaw's tip of threading one spool clockwise and the other counterclockwise so the threads come off in opposite directions.

Step 4 — Threading the machine



I threaded both as one and didn't separate them until I got to the needles.

Step 5 — Thread the needles



Make sure BOTH threads are threaded properly from start to finish. They don't get separated until you get to the needles.

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